THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI RADHAKISHAN MALAVIYA): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) and (c) The 37th session of the Labour Ministers' Conference held on the 7th November, 1988 considered the proposals for amendments to the Minimum Wages Act, 1948. These mainly relate to enhancement in penalties, provision of direct access to Courts to the aggrieved employee, registered voluntary organisations or registered trade unions, interim relief and protection against termination, discharge etc. during the pendency of claims proceedings, and reduction in the periodicity of revision of wages without the variable component liked to the Consumer Price Index. The proposals have not yet been finalised.

Coconut Plantation in Virgin States

1284. SHRI D. B. CHANDRE GOWDA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Coconut Development Board is chalking out a comprehensive plan to take coconut plantation to virgin States;

(b) if so, the details of these states where plantation of coconut is likely to be done; and

(c) to what extent the target of coconut production is likely to be achieved?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV): (a) and (b) Coconut Development Board is planning to promote coconut culture in new areas in both the traditional and nontraditional coconut growing States in order to increase the availability of coconuts in the country. For this purpose, a scheme for expansion of area under coconut is under implementation in 14 States and 2 Union Territories of which Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Tripura are non-traditional belts.

(c) As against the projected demand of 9359 million nuts, the likely production at the end of 7th Plan period is around 6900 million nuts.

Purchase of Old Ships for Steel Rerolling Industry

1285. SHRI D. B. CHANDRE GOWDA: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to purchase the old Ships for the Steel rerolling industry;

(b) if so, how much investment will be made to purchase old ships;

(c) whether the rerolling industry is reeling under the import of raw materials shortage; and

(d) if so, to what extent the rerolling industry will get relief due to purchase of old ships?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI MAKHAN LAL FOTEDAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Canalising Agency, the Metal Scrap Trade Corporation (MSTC) purchases old ships depending on their availability in the international market subject to certain conditions.

(c) and (d) Representations have been received regarding shortage of rerollable materials in general. In the current year a tonnage of about 300,000 tonnes of old ships have been already purchased. This has augmented the availability of rerollable material to the rerolling industry.